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Henry A. Giroux, Brad Evans

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# DISPOSABLE FUTURES

THE SEDUCTION OF VIOLENCE IN THE AGE OF SPECTACLE

BRAD EVANS AND HENRY A. GIROUX



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**Henry A. Giroux, Brad Evans : Disposable Futures: The Seduction of Violence in the Age of Spectacle (City Lights Open Media)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Disposable Futures: The Seduction of Violence in the Age of Spectacle (City Lights Open Media):

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. "Read the last 2frac12; pages first!rdquo;By Rhio9The most telling thing about this book that really says a lot about the dystopian future Giroux so brilliantly analyzes, is that he doesn't begin to discuss ldquo;optimismrdquo; seriously until the last 2frac12; pages, near the very end. The other 244 pages are devoted to an in-depth examination of a variety of subjects, including the following:1. HUMAN

DISPOSABILITY (ldquo;Contemporary neoliberal societies are increasingly defined by their waste.rdqquo;);2. THE MACHINERY OF DISPOSABILITY (ldquo;Under neoliberalism in the US, war has become an extension of politics, transforming spheres of society into combat zones, or killing zones.rdqquo;);3. THE DESTRUCTION OF HUMANITY ("One of the real causalities of the post 9/11 terror wars has been our belief that we can transform the world for the better.rdqquo;);4. THE PREDATORY FORMATION OF NEOLIBERALISM (ldquo;The history of capitalistic development has been one of continued expropriation and plunder of the world's resources ndash; including its people.rdqquo;);5. THE SICKNESS OF REASON (ldquo;The sickness of reason points to the triumph of everyday aggression, the withering of political life and the withdrawal into private obsession.rdqquo;);6. A PROMISE OF VIOLENCE (ldquo;hellip; more people find their behavior pathologized, criminalized and subject to state violence. This is a social order in which bonds of trust have been replaced by bonds of anxiety.rdqquo;);7. RACISM (ldquo;As politics becomes more racialized, the discourse about race become more privatized, indifference and cynicism breed outright contempt and social resentmenthellip;rdquo;);8. THE SPECTACLE OF MILITARIZED RACISM (ldquo;The act of homicide by a white police officer makes visible how a racist military culture now dominates American society.rdqquo;);9. THE FORCE OF LAW (ldquo;Prison begins well outside its gates; from the moment you leave your house.rdqquo;);10. THE POVERTY OF GUILT (ldquo;Somewhere, every culture has an imaginary zone for what it excludes.rdqquo;);11. THE SPECTACLE OF FASCISM (ldquo;hellip;the fascism in us our heads and in our everyday behavior, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us.rdqquo;);12. RITUALS OF HUMILIATION (ldquo;Violence and humiliation cannot be understood outside of the racism and brutality that accompanies the exercise of powerhellip;rdquo;);13. VIOLENCE AND THE SURVEILLANCE STATE (ldquo;..the worst excesses of capitalism are a consumer-driven ethic furthering the collective indifference to the growth of the surveillance state.rdqquo;);14. DYSTOPIAN REALISM (ldquo;Neoliberalism's retreat from social responsibility, costs and ethics contain monstrous logic and ISIS seems to have adopted that logic and deployed it to the extreme as a political and military weapon.rdqquo;)Finally, 2frac12; pages near the end of the book, Giroux subtitles his last section: BEYOND SPECTACLE (ldquo;While the subject of this book is concentrated in the bleakness of the contemporary condition, there are reasons to be optimistic.rdqquo;) BLEAKNESS ndash; that'squo;s an understatement, and unfortunately, the ldquo;reasons to be optimistic'rdquo; only fill up 2frac12; pages!Giroux writes that ldquo;neoliberalism is exhausted and its modes of subjectivity increasingly revealing of its self-destructive nihilism.rdqquo; He thinks that its brutal response to dissent, protest and civic disobedience is proof of neoliberalism's end game. He argues that now we can begin to think about neoliberalism in the context of its ldquo;present deathrdquo;. He believes ldquo;people will always resist what they find patently intolerable. Despite the horrors, they will find reasons to believe in the world and that it can be transformed for the better.rdqquo;Giroux's optimism in the future, in spite of the horrors of our current dystopian, neoliberal reality, is expressed in the idea that ldquo;in the realm of the imagination, we can rethink the world.rdqquo; He believes that "the human condition is defined by our ability to imagine a better world, and that the power of the imagination is already engaged in a form of political resistance and struggle.rdqquo;He concludes, ldquo;To dare to imagine is always the start of a new form of politics that doesn't passively wait for historical forces to come to the rescue.rdqquo; This is all well and good, and of course, it is brilliant and inspiring, and it is a MUST-READ book! I only wish I would have read the last 2frac12; pages FIRST!1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. I would recommend Berardi's book on the same topic insteadBy Christopher M. MoylanI was expecting something original and closely reasoned. This is a cross between textbook summary and often shrill assertion. I tend to agree with the authors' point of view but I was hoping for a text that was thought provoking and, ideally, inspiring. This is neither. I would recommend Berardi's book on the same topic instead.1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A realistic look at what is wrong with the American SocietyBy rotaroterThe Authors put words to what I have been thinking for a long time.

"This is a must-read book for anyone ready to transcend fear and imagine a new reality."--Tikkun Disposable Futures makes the case that we have not just become desensitized to violence, but rather, that we are being taught to desire it. From movies and other commercial entertainment to "extreme" weather and acts of terror, authors Brad Evans and Henry Giroux examine how a contemporary politics of spectacle--and disposability--curates what is seen and what is not, what is represented and what is ignored, and ultimately, whose lives matter and whose do not. Disposable Futures explores the connections between a range of contemporary phenomena: mass surveillance, the militarization of police, the impact of violence in film and video games, increasing disparities in wealth, and representations of ISIS and the ongoing terror wars. Throughout, Evans and Giroux champion the significance of public education, social movements and ideas that rebel against the status quo in order render violence intolerable. "Disposable Futures poses, and answers, the pressing question of our times: How is it that in this post-Fascist, post-Cold War era of peace and prosperity we are saddled with more war, violence, inequality and poverty than ever? The neoliberal era, Evans and Giroux brilliantly reveal, is defined by violence, by drone strikes, 'smart' bombs, militarized police, Black lives taken, prison expansion, corporatized education, surveillance, the raw violence of racism, patriarchy, starvation and want. The authors show how the neoliberal regime normalizes violence, renders its victims disposable, commodifies the spectacle of relentless

violence and sells it to us as entertainment, and tries to contain cultures of resistance. If you're not afraid of the truth in these dark times, then read this book. It is a beacon of light."--Robin D. G. Kelley, author of *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* "Disposable Futures confronts a key conundrum of our times: How is it that, given the capacity and abundance of resources to address the critical needs of all, so many are having their futures radically discounted while the privileged few dramatically increase their wealth and power? Brad Evans and Henry Giroux have written a trenchant analysis of the logic of late capitalism that has rendered it normal to dispose of any who do not service the powerful. A searing indictment of the socio-technics of destruction and the decisions of their deployability. Anyone concerned with trying to comprehend these driving dynamics of our time would be well served by taking up this compelling book."--David Theo Goldberg, author of *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism* "Disposable Futures is an utterly spellbinding analysis of violence in the later 20th and early 21st centuries. It strikes me as a new breed of street-smart intellectualism moving through broad ranging theoretical influences of Adorno, Arendt, Bauman, Deleuze, Foucault, Zizek, Marcuse, and Reich. I especially appreciated a number of things, including: the discussion of representation and how it functions within a broader logics of power; the descriptions and analyses of violence mediating the social field and fracturing it through paralyzing fear and anxiety; the colonization of bodies and pleasures; and the nuanced discussion of how state violence, surveillance, and disposability connect. Big ideas explained using a fresh straightforward voice."--Adrian Parr, author of *The Wrath of Capital: Neoliberalism and Climate Change Politics* Brad Evans and Henry A. Giroux are internationally renowned educators, authors, and intellectuals. Together, they curate a forum for Truthout.com that explores the theme of "Disposable Futures." Evans is director of histories of violence project at the University of Bristol, United Kingdom. Giroux holds McMaster University Chair for Scholarship in the Public Interest, and is the Paulo Freire Distinguished Scholar in Critical Pedagogy.

"Brad Evans and Henry Giroux's *Disposable Futures* is an insightful meditation on the role of violence in modern American society. In eight well-conceived and thoughtfully argued chapters, Evans and Giroux present readers with a damning critique of neoliberalism."--Gregory D. Smithers, *American Book* "It is in this spirit of interrogation that *Disposable Futures* is situated. Evans is here joined by the American-Canadian Cultural critic Henry Giroux, who is well-known for his critical writings on education. It is no surprise, then, that the book, drawing on the writings of the Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire, should be so focussed on the transformative powers of critical pedagogy."--Jack D. Palmer, *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* "Brad Evans and Henry Giroux offer a trenchant analysis of neoliberalism's ills: its violence, its dystopian vision, its intrusiveness, and its attempt to eradicate all critical consciousness and with it all hope. They diagnose our exposure to disposability in an era marked by the collapse of a vision of a viable future. In doing so, they have laid out the challenge before us. The only question left is, do we have the will, as the authors suggest, to fabricate a nonviolent response to it?"--Todd May, Class of 1941 Memorial Professor of the Humanities, Clemson University "Beginning with Primo Levi and ending with Deleuze, Evans and Giroux map the radical transformation that has affected the representation of cruelty between the 20th and the 21st century: from 'exceptional' status, associated with the ultimate figures of state sovereignty, it has passed to 'routinized' object of communication, consumption and manipulation. This is not to say that everything is visible, only that the protocols of visibility have been appropriated by a different form of economy, where humans are completely disposable. To counter this violence in the second degree, and preserve our capacity to face the intolerable, a new aesthetics and politics of imagination is required. This powerful, committed, exciting book does more than just evoke its urgency. It already practices it."--Etienne Balibar, author of *Violence and Civility* "This profound and timely paperback covers the tragic and disheartening phenomenon of the continuing increase of violence in the world today. It is evident in film and video games where the carnage is appalling; it is revealed in the militarization of the police; it is supported by the trampling on human rights to privacy through widespread surveillance; it is showcased in the great disparities of wealth and poverty; and it is present in the dehumanization policies of ISIS and of those who willing to do anything to win the terror wars."--Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat, *Spirituality and Practice*